

A comparison of undergraduates music listening habits in everyday life and while studying

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In this paper, we report an investigation of the music listening habits of a population of undergraduates in everyday life and while studying. In particular, we compare their preferences for different music genres in each situation, as well as the role of individual factors and traits in such judgments. Rating scales and free answer questionnaires were administered to 92 students of the University of Liverpool (UK). The questionnaires aimed at exploring (a) whether or not students listen to music while studying; (b) which music genres do students prefer listening to while studying and in everyday life; (c) the perceived effects of music on studying at both cognitive and affective levels; and (d) the mediating role of gender, personality traits and musicianship. Statistical analysis revealed various important results. First, students listen significantly more to classical music while studying than in free time, and listen significantly less to all other genres studied (except folk and soundtracks). Second, compared to male students, female undergraduates listen significantly less to Jazz and Blues music, irrespective of the situation (studying or not). Third, clear differences were found between the music preferences of listeners with different personality traits: extraverts listen to Folk and Jazz music less often than introverts; conscientious students listen more often to Blues, Pop, and Soundtracks, and less to Electronic and Religious music; and students high in openness to new experiences listen more to Jazz and less to Religious music). Fourth, further quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal some of the reasons why students listen to music while studying, and the musical and affective characteristics of the music that is preferred. Finally, we discuss the implications of these findings in terms of positive and negative effects on studying skills.